

AGN. NO.____

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

JUNE 28, 2016

HR 5456: FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES ACT OF 2016

On June 21, 2016, the United States House of Representatives voted unanimously in support of HR 5456, known as the Family First Prevention Services Act. The bill seeks to avoid unnecessary placement of foster care youth in group homes and enable more children to live safely with their families through the provision of prevention and in-home family services. While Los Angeles County (County) agrees with the intent and the goals of HR 5456, there are a number of provisions that will restrict the County's ability to effectively serve abused and neglected children.

As drafted, HR 5456 eliminates Federal funding reimbursement for a number of successful programs, such as Transitional Housing Placement Plus, which provides housing and services for foster children ages 16 and older. It renders many children ineligible for federal foster care benefits and includes onerous out-of-home placement requirements that would hinder the County's efforts to implement the state's Continuum of Care reforms that go into effect on January 1, 2017. HR 5456 also imposes costly requirements that divert funding from prevention and supportive services to families.

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MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
JUNE 28, 2016
PAGE 2

The County's significant concerns are supported by local organizations such as Public Counsel, the Alliance for Children's Rights, Children Now, and Social Change Partners, as well as the California State Department of Social Services (CDSS), the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) of California, and the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). Since the bill's draft language was not released until June 10th, state and local governments were not allowed adequate time to provide meaningful input on the legislation. As a result, CDSS, CWDA, and CSAC are also sending letters expressing many of the same concerns as the County's. California alone serves more than one-fifth of all federally eligible foster children.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS send a five-signature letter to Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer requesting that the Senate allow time to work with the County and stakeholders to help address major concerns with HR 5456: Family First Prevention Services Act of 2016, including the need for flexibility, before the Senate considers such significant legislation impacting the County and nation's most vulnerable children and youth.

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